

1930

Dear Sir :-

It is very good of you to put space in your valuable paper at my disposal, to add my tribute to the great master Leopold von Auer.

It was my privilege to be the first foreigner ever admitted to the St-Petersburg Conservatory & the second Auer pupil to appear in Europe, following Elman by one year, both in Berlin & London. The next year Gimbalist appeared & we three toured Europe for several seasons before young Heifetz, Seidel & others came out.

I find it almost impossible to give any idea of the great personality of Prof Auer. He was a man interested in all the arts, in people & politics - most simple in his tastes & habits. How he loved his summers spent in various German towns & cure places. Many precious memories I shall always have of those months. The walks after work was over - I can see & hear him now - telling amusing stories of his career - stopping to illustrate them with many gesticulations, to the wonder & astonishment of the passerby, perhaps resting en route for coffee or "dicke Milch". What a privilege it was for a student to listen to those wise & witty outpourings of a singularly lovable & great character.

One found him always willing to try new music, altho he did not especially care for the very modern. I remember in Russia a concert where a particularly violent expression of modern music was being performed. Auer turned to me with a twinkle in his eye & said "The music of the future - thank God I shall not be here to listen to it." - What a keen wit he had and how

out-look on life - Apart from his wonderful violin playing he had a rich singing voice (baritone) & he used to tell with pride how the great pianist Rubenstein would insist on Auer playing the piano to him - because Rubenstein said he loved to hear his beautiful touch on that instrument -

It is doubtless well known that the Prof. spoke Russian French German & Eng fluently &

If I had to stress any outstanding quality in his teaching, I should first of all say beauty of tone - "Sing - sing on the violin" he would say - or again "music is a luxury - if it does not give pleasure & have an agreeable sound there is no excuse for it" -

Perhaps next, it seemed "individuality" - I counted most with him - How often he used to say "I will not have a mould that every scholar must fit into".

In the last he was interested in everything connected with music & especially the violin - with that joy he would point out fresh nuances in scores that he must have played & taught hundreds of times -

Unnecessary to say how valuable his criticism was even for those of us who were concentrating & supposed to be finished - He once said to me, apparently trying to excuse his criticism of a passage I had just played to him "If the Angel Gabriel came down from Heaven I should still offer him some advice as to how to play the violin"

Of his kindness to his pupils one could write volumes - He never failing unless he showed

in the slightest - detail of their lives - they were indeed
"musical children" to him - as he so often called them

And now the world has lost a very
great man, but we, his pupils, must sorrow for a
dear friend & counsellor, as well as a beloved &
honoured master -

R - P -

